DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 372 863 PS 022 652

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TITLE The Effectiveness of Teaching Values Implicitly as Compared to Teaching Values Both Implicitly and Explicitly at the Kindergarten Level: Teachers' Perspectives.
PUB DATE 1 May 94
NOTE 37p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; *Instructional Effectiveness; *Kindergarten; *Preschool Teachers; Primary Education; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teaching Methods; *Values Education
IDENTIFIERS Explicit Instruction; Honesty

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of teaching the value of honesty to kindergarten students. Specifically, it examined whether kindergarten teachers believed it was more effective to teach values implicitly as compared to teaching values both implicitly and explicitly. Also investigated was the reason why teachers might avoid teaching values explicitly. Twenty-seven kindergarten teachers in central Virginia were surveyed. The survey contained five pairs of methods for teaching the value of honesty. One method of each pair was implicit only; the other method was implicit and explicit. Teachers chose the method they thought would be more effective for conveying the value of honesty. The survey found that the combination of implicit and explicit methods was judged more successful than just implicit methods for teaching the value of honesty. Most teachers did include explicit teaching of values; teachers believed those who taught values only implicitly did so because they did not think explicit teaching of values was effective. For example, it is possible that teachers of other grades would not agree that it is effective to teach values to their students both implicitly and explicitly. (Twenty-one references and a copy of the survey instrument with results are attached.) (TM)

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The Effectiveness of Teaching Values Implicitly As Compared to Teaching Values Both Implicitly and Explicitly at the Kindergarten Level: Teachers' Perspectives

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Running Head: IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT TEACHING OF VALUES

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of teaching values implicitly as compared to the effectiveness of teaching values both implicitly and explicitly at the Kindergarten level. Twenty-seven Kindergarten teachers from Central Virginia were surveyed. The survey contained five pairs of teaching methods for teaching the value of honesty. One method of each pair was implicit only, while the other method was both implicit and explicit. Subjects chose the method of each pair which they thought would be more effective for conveying the value of honesty to Kindergarten students. It was hypothesized that a combination of implicit and explicit teaching methods would be found to be most effective for conveying the value of honesty at the Kindergarten level. Results supported the hypothesis that a combination of implicit and explicit teaching methods is found to be more effective for conveying the value of honesty than implicit teaching methods only.

CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM

NEED

The teaching of values in school is an area of education which has been explored by many, but for which few have come to definite conclusions. The one conclusion which seems to be shared by the majority of those who have investigated the issue of values education, is that there is a definite need for the teaching of values in school. While most agree that values should be taught in school, there is much disagreement concerning how values should be taught. It is this issue into which the present study will provide insight, as it investigates the perspectives of teachers on the best methods for teaching values.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to find out which strategies teachers find most effective for teaching values at the Kindergarten level. Specifically, it looks at whether Kindergarten teachers believe it is most effective to teach the value of 'honesty' only implicitly, or by using a combination of implicit and explicit methods. The study assumes that teachers are required to teach values in their classroom, and it

addresses the value of honesty only. These limitations are important so that the focus of the study can be narrowed to look only at how teachers think values are most effectively taught, not whether values should be taught or which values should be taught.

HYPOTHESIS

There are three hypotheses for this study. The first, and primary hypothesis, is that Kindergarten teachers will think that it is more effective to teach the value of honesty using a combination of implicit and explicit methods than to teach honesty using only implicit methods. This study also expects to find that most Kindergarten teachers do not include the explicit teaching of values in their classrooms. The final hypothesis is that the main reason teachers would not teach values explicitly is that they do not want to risk conflict with other educational professional or parents.

OVERVIEW

In order to provide background for this study, a second chapter will review the existing literature on the teaching of values in school, and will make clear the need for the present investigation. A third chapter

will explain the design of the present study, including information on how the data was collected and analyzed. The fourth chapter will present the results which were found, and the fifth will summarize these results and draw conclusions concerning their implications.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

NEED FOR CHANGE IN EDUCATION

The teaching of values in school is not by any means a new concept. In fact, the first schools were instituted for the purpose of teaching values. As the educational system developed, however, the focus of teaching shifted to that of academics, and the teaching of values assumed a lesser role in the schools, shifting the responsibility for conveying values to the family.

Unfortunately, modern society has seen a breakdown of the family. Children are spending less and less time with their parents, and as a result, the family has not been able to fulfill its role as the conveyor of values. Subsequently, researchers and educational professionals, in confronting the difficulty of teaching children who possess little moral background, have concluded that it is time for schools to regain some of the responsibility for teaching values to children. For example, Mark W. Cannon, in his paper, "Crime and the Decline of Values," links the sharp rise of crime in American society to society's failure to transmit positive values from one generation to the next. One of Cannon's recommendations for changing the negative trend is to teach values in

school (Cannon, 1981).

Another example of an educator concerned with the problems of youth behavior in society today is J. Amundson. She argues that a shift in the structure of traditional families from two parent, single career families to more single-parent and two career families, has resulted in parents not having as much time to instill values in their children as they have had traditionally. According to Amundson, schools should have a role in teaching children values (Amundson, 1991).

If parents do not have as much time to teach their children values, then how will children in today's society learn values? Many researchers believe that educators should work together with families and other societal institutions to bring about necessary changes. Gerald Grant believes that it is essential for public schools to rethink their general purposes and philosophies of education to include values education, consisting of core societal values and basic morality (Grant, 1981). Thomas Lickona described the problem American educators are facing today as an impending morality crisis (Lickona, 1988).

VALUES SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN THE CLASSROOM

Most of the research to date in the area of teaching values in school points to the conclusion that it is important to have values as part of a school curriculum. Many education research specialists believe that reform should begin directly in the classroom, by teaching values to students. Theorists who recommend change in education acknowledge that children need to learn values at school. Both Cannon and Amundson support teaching children values in the classroom in an effort to combat the crisis society is facing. Other researchers strongly support values education in the school. Joseph A. Braun, Jr. recommends an elementary school curriculum which is founded on teaching values in the school (Braun, 1992). Tuck and Albury recommend teaching values in the school on the grounds that both parents and administrators support values education (Tuck, Albury, 1990). Davis and Grimes argue that it is actually the civic responsibility of each public school to teach its students values (Davis, Grimes, 1985). By not teaching young people clear values, the U. S. educational system has actually failed society (California School Boards Association, 1981).

There are many examples of schools, who after

studying values education, incorporated teaching values into the curriculum. The Baltimore County (Maryland) Public Schools successfully adopted values, based on the Constitution and Bill of Rights, into their curriculums (Saterlie, 1988). Other proponents of values education differ on how to define which values should be taught. Donald Thomas believes that it should be the responsibility of schools to cultivate values in their students (Thomas, 1985). He recommends that the standard of basic values come from our national ethos. Edward Wynne and Paul Vitz (1985) also stress the importance of teaching values. They believe that values differ from culture to culture, so it is necessary for each culture to transmit their own values from one generation to the next (Wynne, 1985). Regardless of which values educators propose should be taught, an overwhelming number of current researchers agree that values should be taught in the classroom.

Barry Kanpol agrees that values should be taught because they are already being inherently taught in every classroom. Moral values are always an implied part of the curriculum, thus they should not be kept hidden (Kanpol, 1988). Hazel J. Rozema also believes that values are already taught in every class.

Therefore, she believes the main question is not whether or not values should be taught, but rather how they should be taught, (Rozema, 1982).

IMPLICIT VERSUS EXPLICIT TEACHING OF VALUES

As already noted, most of the research in the area of teaching values in school points to the conclusion that it is important to have values as part of a school curriculum. Therefore, current researchers do not usually debate the question of whether or not values should be taught in the classroom. They conclude that values should be taught. Accepting that values should be taught in schools, there are two important questions left to be addressed: 1) which values should be taught, and 2) how values should be taught. This study will not address the question of which values should be taught. It will address how values should be taught, and will do so in consideration of the value of honesty only, assuming that this value is one that most would agree should be taught. Once school districts decide which values to teach, the question becomes how to teach them most effectively. One researcher specifically states that the major controversy surrounding values education is whether or not values should be taught directly or

indirectly, (Irwin, 1988). According to Irwin, educators must determine whether to teach values explicitly or implicitly. At this point it is necessary that these two terms, 'explicit' and 'implicit', be defined.

A value is being taught explicitly when a teacher makes clear to students that is it right and good to possess that value. For example, in the case of honesty, directly stating to students that it is right to be honest and that it is wrong to lie is explicit. The implicit teaching of a value occurs when a teacher refrains from explicitly stating that it is right and good to possess that value. Instead, the teacher uses other means to engage the student in contemplating the meaning of that value for himself or herself. To approach teaching the value of honesty either implicitly or explicitly, a teacher might read stories in which the characters were honest or dishonest, present students with dilemmas in which they were to decide whether to solve the dilemma with honesty or dishonesty, or model honest behavior herself or himself. What separates explicit from implicit teaching is whether, at some point in each of these examples, the teacher explicitly gives the opinion that it is right to be honest and

wrong to lie. In effect, explicit teaching provides the students with a "correct" understanding of the value. The working definitions for explicit and implicit teaching, as used by this study, are as follows: explicit teaching- expressing that a particular value is right and good, and implicit teaching- implying that a particular value is right and good.

It is no surprise that the issue of whether to teach implicitly or explicitly is a controversial one, in light of the basic tenants of American society today. Namely, the basic tenants are that individuals are capable of and should be allowed to decide what things they will value and what things they will not. With this in mind, one questions if it can be a teacher's right and responsibility to explicitly declare to students that they should observe certain values.

SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS OF THE POSITION THAT VALUES SHOULD BE TAUGHT ONLY IMPLICITLY

Some researchers recommend teaching values only implicitly. For example, Pamela B. Joseph recommends teaching values only implicitly, without any direct explicit instruction. She believes that children will

sufficiently learn moral responsibility by having good role models and opportunities to practice moral behavior (Joseph, 1986).

One popular example of implicitly teaching values is Values Clarification. The recommended strategies of Values Clarification emphasize self-awareness. Proponents of this movement argue that children will develop values on their own if they recognize what brings them pleasure, and then reflect upon their own preferences (Simon, Howe, Kirschenbaum, 1972). Richard A. Baer notes that in Values Clarification children are provided with a method to help them sort out different possibilities and then pick what feels right for them (Baer, 1983).

While this method may be somewhat effective, it may be that teaching values would be more effective when combined with clear, explicit instruction. Many theorists disagree with Sidney Simon's method of Values Clarification. Allen S. Vann does not believe that modeling moral behavior is an effective method to teach children values because adults inconsistently practice morality and so confuse children (Vann, 1988). William Casement also argues against Values Clarification's method of implicit teaching. He argues that the theory

of choice is insufficient (Casement, 1983). According to Ray T. Wilcox, mild forms of indoctrination are actually necessary to pass along values to children (Wilcox, 1988). Other literature discusses weaknesses of Values Clarification, such as Edward Beller's "Education for Character: An Alternative to Values Clarification...," (Beller, 1986).

EFFECTIVENESS OF IMPLICIT COMBINED WITH EXPLICIT TEACHING OF VALUES

To date, the way in which the dilemma of how to teach values has often been addressed has been by teaching values only implicitly. That is, teachers include value issues in their classrooms but do not directly tell students what to believe about these values. Whether or not this method of teaching is most effective for conveying certain values to children as compared to explicit teaching, it involves less of a risk of conflict with those who disagree with the teaching of values in school.

Although teaching values only implicitly is the most popular method of teaching values, much literature about teaching values supports combining implicit with explicit teaching strategies. Wynne and Vitz (1985)

evaluated the effectiveness of teaching values using a variety of methods. Their investigations centered around an implicit teaching model, Values Clarification, and a combination approach which included both implicit as well as explicit methods. They concluded that educators should return to the combination approach because they found it to be most effective in conveying values. Richard Beswick (1992) also recommends directly teaching values to students. He addresses many of the controversial issues surrounding implementing an explicit approach to teaching values, such as issues concerning which values should be taught. He also addresses the popular trend in society to avoid explicitly teaching values, while strongly urging educators who support only implicitly teaching values to rethink their positions.

Along with these two reports, both Lockwood (1991) and Nyberg (1990) strongly recommend teaching values by combining implicit and explicit strategies. One researcher, Baer (1982), recommends teaching values using both implicit and explicit methods because he points out that teaching values only implicitly, without ever expressing that a particular value is right and good, is not a neutral position for a teacher to take.

He explains that teaching values only implicitly expressly conveys one particular value, which is moral relativism.

Motivation for the present study was in part the notion, as set forth by researchers, that teaching values only implicitly may not be the most effective way to convey values to students. As many of these researchers suggest, it may be the case that including the explicit teaching of values would improve the effectiveness of conveying values to students. Accepting that it is important that values be conveyed to students by teachers, would it not make sense to teach values in the way that would convey them most effectively?

Another impetus for this study was the question of whether teachers who are teaching only implicitly do so in order to avoid risking conflict with those who might oppose the teaching of values. The other possibility is that they teach only implicitly because they believe this to be the most effective way to teach values.

LACK OF LITERATURE ON TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ABOUT HOW TO EFFECTIVELY TEACH VALUES

In review of the research, it is difficult to

assess whether teachers do purposefully exclude explicit methods of teaching values, and for what reasons they might do so. This difficulty is due to the absence of literature concerning teachers' perspectives on and practices of teaching values.

It is indeed interesting that amidst all the research on teaching values in the classroom, very little research has investigated teachers' perspectives on the matter. As experts in teaching, it seems that teachers' perspectives on how values can be taught most effectively would be important to consider. It is this opinion that led this study to focus on teachers' perspectives concerning methods of teaching values.

This study focuses on effective teaching strategies for teaching the value of `honesty.' The reason for this focus was to narrow the study. The teachers surveyed were all at the Kindergarten level. Again, the study was focused in order to narrow the parameters of this investigation.

The purpose of the present study is to find out whether teachers think that including the explicit teaching of values is more effective for conveying those values than using implicit means only. The study will also look at whether teachers think that most teachers

include the explicit teaching of values in their classrooms, and the reasons why teachers might refrain from teaching explicitly.

CHAPTER III: THE STUDY

SAMPLE

The subjects of this study were twenty-seven teachers from Central Virginia. Four of the teachers were Kindergarten/First Grade teachers, and the rest were Kindergarten teachers. All of the teachers were female.

MEASURES

The device used to measure the teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of implicit versus a combination of implicit and explicit teaching methods for teaching values was a one-page survey (see attached). The survey contained a paragraph explaining the survey, and two sections of statements and questions to which teachers responded. The paragraph explaining the survey made clear that teachers were to respond to the items on the survey assuming that they were required to teach the value of honesty. Teachers were to respond not according to how they presently teach values, how their school would like for them to teach values, nor how parents would like for them to teach values. They were to respond in the way that they thought would be most effective for conveying the value of honesty to

their students. Part One of the survey contained five pairs of teaching methods for which teachers were to indicate (with a check mark) which method of the pair would be most effective for teaching the value of honesty. For each pair of methods, one method of the pair included only implicit teaching of the value of honesty, while the other method of the pair included both implicit and explicit methods of teaching the value of honesty. Part Two of the survey asked two questions. The first question was, "Do you think that most Kindergarten teachers include the explicit teaching of values in their classrooms?" To this question teachers indicated (with a check mark) either "yes" or "no". The second question of Part Two of the survey was, "Which of the following reasons do you think best explains why a teacher might refrain from teaching a value explicitly?" For this question teachers indicated (with a check mark) one of three responses. These responses were: "Does not think explicit teaching is effective in conveying values", "Does not think values should be taught in school", and "Does not want to risk conflict with other educational professionals or parents".

DESIGN

In order to analyze the results of the survey, each survey was given a score for Part One. Part One was the section which included the five pairs of teaching scenarios, one of each pair a method which was implicit only and the other of the pair being a combination of implicit and explicit methods. Each survey received a score which was the number of methods chosen as most effective out of the five (total number of pairs of methods) that were a combination of implicit and explicit strategies. For example, if a teacher chose as most effective for three out of the five pairs of teaching methods the combination of implicit and explicit strategies, the score given to her survey would be "3". This same survey would have indicated that only implicit strategies were most effective for two of the pairs of teaching methods, since there were five pairs total. The number of questions out of five which indicated that a combination of implicit and explicit teaching methods was most effective for all of the surveys were compiled into a single histogram which revealed the number of surveys which were represented by each possible number (see attached). For Part Two of the survey, for each question the percentage of teachers

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who indicated each possible response were calculated (see attached).

ANALYSIS

Results indicated that only two out of the twenty-seven teachers surveyed chose the implicit teaching strategy as most effective for all five pairs of methods in Part One of the survey. This accounted for seven percent of the teachers surveyed. The remaining percentage of the teachers surveyed, ninety-three percent, chose at least one teaching method out of the five pairs which included both implicit and explicit teaching strategies. This means that ninety-three percent of the teachers would include, at least to some extent, the explicit teaching of values in their classrooms. Sixty-nine percent of the teachers surveyed chose the combination of implicit and explicit teaching strategies more often than they chose implicit teaching methods only. Results for Part Two of the survey were as follows: Eighty-one percent of the teachers surveyed answered "yes" to the question "Do you think that most Kindergarten teachers include the explicit teaching of values in their classrooms?". When asked the question "Which of the following reasons do you think best

explains why a teacher might refrain from teaching a value explicitly?", four percent answered "Does not think values should be taught in school", twenty-nine percent answered "Does not want to risk conflict with other educational professionals or parents", and sixty-seven percent answered "Does not think explicit teaching is effective in conveying values".

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Results supported the hypothesis that Kindergarten teachers think that it is more effective to use a combination of implicit and explicit teaching methods than to use only implicit methods to teach the value of honesty. Ninety-three percent of teachers chose at least one teaching method out of five which included the explicit teaching of the value of honesty. Sixty-nine percent chose methods which included explicit strategies for the majority of their responses.

The hypothesis that most teachers do not include the explicit teaching of values in their classrooms was not supported by the results. Eighty-one percent of the teachers surveyed responded that they thought most teachers do teach values explicitly in their classrooms.

The hypothesis that the main reason teachers would not teach explicitly would be because they do not want to risk conflict with other educational professionals and parents was not supported by the results. The reason most often given for why a teacher would not include the explicit teaching of values in the classroom was that the teacher does not find the explicit teaching of values effective.

In summary, it was found that most teachers think that it is most effective to include the explicit teaching of values in their classrooms, and most teachers do teach values including explicit methods. Those teachers who teach values only implicitly do so not because they want to avoid conflict with other educational professionals and parents, but because they do not find explicit teaching effective for conveying values. Basically, the results found that teachers teach in the way that they find most effective, and for most teachers this means including explicit methods.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

This study looked at the effectiveness of teaching values implicitly as compared to teaching values both implicitly and explicitly at the Kindergarten level, by surveying Kindergarten teachers. The results of the study indicate that including the explicit teaching of values along with the implicit teaching of values at the Kindergarten level is more effective than using only implicit methods for conveying values to students.

The results of this study are contrary to much of the existing literature concerning the most effective ways to convey values to students. For example, the method for teaching values which is currently being proposed as most effective in teacher education programs is Values Clarification, a method which includes only the implicit teaching of values.

While this study indicates that most Kindergarten teachers find the use of explicit teaching of values effective, it is impossible to generalize these conclusions to all grade levels. It is possible that teachers of other grades would not agree that it is effective to teach values to their students both implicitly and explicitly. Some of the teachers

surveyed in this study were Kindergarten/First Grade teachers, and so some generalization about the effectiveness of including the explicit teaching of values at the first grade level may be made.

It is also important to note that the first part of the survey used in this study focused only on the value of honesty. One can not assume that the teaching methods teachers think are most effective for conveying the value of honesty are the same methods that they would think are most effective for conveying other values, such as justice or authority.

Interestingly, however, the results of Part Two of the survey allow the conclusions regarding teaching the value of honesty to be extended to apply to values in general. The results from the first question of Part Two of the survey indicate that most teachers do include the explicit teaching of values (not just honesty) in their classrooms. The results from the second question of Part Two indicate that teachers teach using the methods that they think are most effective, regardless of the risk of conflict with others who might disagree with these methods. The combination of these two indications, 1) that most teachers include explicit methods in conveying values, and 2) that teachers teach

values in the way that they think is most effective for conveying values, allows the conclusion to be drawn that most teachers think that it is most effective to include explicit teaching methods in teaching values in general, not just in teaching the value of honesty.

This finding, that it is more effective to convey values by combining implicit and explicit teaching methods than to use implicit methods alone, is a very important finding for educators today. These results support the idea that it may be difficult for children to learn appropriate values without explicit guidance regarding certain values being right and good. Perhaps teaching values only implicitly does not give clear enough guidance for Kindergarten students wanting to learn values, and it may not provide clear enough guidance for students of other grades. It is important that the values of our society be conveyed to our youth. The existing research has overwhelmingly concluded that there is a need for the teaching of values in our schools. This study contributes to helping educators decide how to most effectively teach those values.

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Kindergarten Teachers' Perspectives on Methods of Teaching Values

This survey is aimed at finding out which strategies teachers find most effective for teaching values at the Kindergarten level. The following questions are NOT geared to find out how you presently teach values, how your school would like for you to teach values, nor how parents in the community would like for you to teach values. Rather, it is aimed to find out which methods you believe would be most effective in your classroom for teaching, in this case, the value of honesty. Please try to disregard your personal convictions about whether or not values should be taught in school. Assume that you are required to teach the value of honesty. Do your best to think from your students' point of view, anticipating how they would best learn this value.

PART I

For each of the following pairs of teaching methods, place a check beside the method which you think would be more effective in teaching your students the value of honesty.

1. ____ Read a book about a character who is honest and discuss with children the qualities of the main character. Or...
   ____ Read a book about a character who is honest and ask children to think of ways they could be more honest, like the main character.

2. ____ In a class discussion about honesty, allow students to develop their own views about whether honesty is right or wrong, without intervening. Or...
   ____ At some point during a classroom discussion about honesty, discuss with children that it is right to be honest and wrong to lie.

3. ____ Model honest behavior yourself, as well as telling students that it is important that they behave honestly. Or...
   ____ Model honest behavior yourself, without explicitly stating to students that they should behave honestly.

4. ____ Provide scenarios which provoke children's thoughts about honesty without giving an "answer" (i.e. that honesty is right). Or...
   ____ Provide scenarios which provoke children's thoughts about honesty while guiding them to the conclusion that honesty is right.

5. ____ Role play scenes using puppets who demonstrate honest and dishonest behavior. Or...
   ____ Have students role play scenes in which they practice honest behavior.

PART II

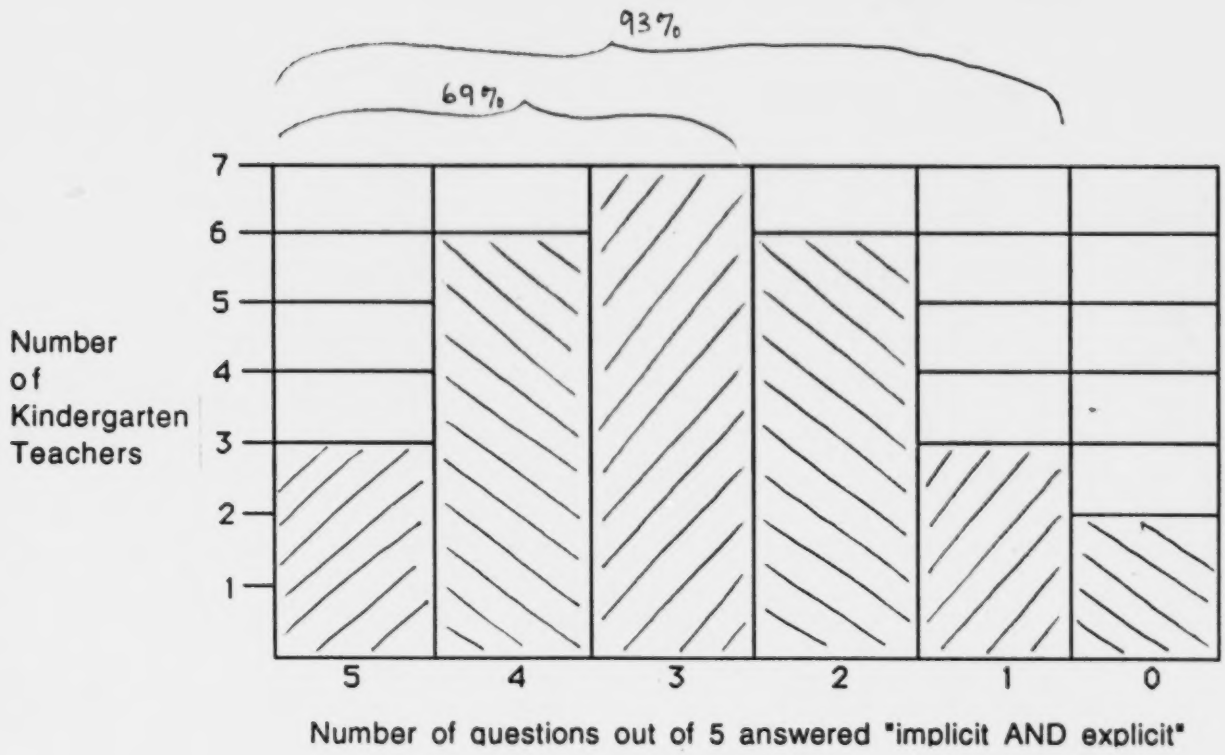
Do you think that most Kindergarten teachers include the explicit teaching of values in their classrooms (i.e. it is right to be honest, it is wrong to lie)? Check one.

____ Yes
____ No

Which of the following reasons do you think best explains why a teacher might refrain from teaching a value explicitly? Check one.

____ Does not think explicit teaching is effective in conveying values
____ Does not think values should be taught in school
____ Does not want to risk conflict with other educational professionals or parents

Kindergarten Teachers' Perspectives on Methods of Teaching the Value of Honesty



When asked the question, "Do you think that most Kindergarten teachers include the explicit teaching of values in their classrooms?",

81%

answered "Yes"

When asked the question, "What reason best explains why a teacher might refrain from teaching a value explicitly?",

4% answered "Does not think values should be taught in school."

29% answered " Does not want to risk conflict with other educational professionals or parents."

67% answered "Does not think explicit teaching is effective in conveying values."